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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ACCRA 000618

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV PINR PREL SNAR ECON GH

SUBJECT: CPP PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE MOVING QUIETLY TO REGISTER VOTERS; SEEKING POSSIBLE ALLIANCE WITH THE PNC

REF: A. ACCRA 612

¶B. ACCRA 605

Classified By: Ambassador Pamela E. Bridgewater, for reasons 1.5 (b)

At a lunch I hosted on May 8, 2008 with Convention People,s Party (CPP) Presidential Candidate Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom, the former Minister of Public Sector Reform and MCC compact lead POC shared the following thoughts on a variety of subjects I raised:

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Revitalization of the CPP  
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¶1. (C) It was not until 1992 that the CPP began its comeback as a party. Disaffected Nkrumaists had fled to the National Democratic Congress (NDC) party in droves, with lesser numbers joining the New Patriotic Party (NPP). The CPP under Nduom's capable leadership is now reaching out to former members at home and abroad to rally around his presidential bid and to bring the party back as a meaningful political contender.

-- Concern over labels such as capitalist or socialist are less important than the ability to deliver economic growth, political stability and social empowerment, according to Nduom.

-- Nkrumah,s daughter Samia returned from Italy where she will be active in party organizing and campaign work, and will contest a parliamentary seat. Nduom said that he would encourage other talented Ghanaians to return home, and hopes to entice many of them to align with a more dynamic and focused CPP. One of Nkrumah's sons, Sekou, announced last year he had joined the NDC, and the eldest son Francis is a distinguished professor at the University of Ghana in Legon.

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Nduom's Vision  
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¶2. (C) An Nduom presidency would forge a Ghana that serves the needs of all Ghanaians. He envisions improving infrastructure projects such as roads. For example, constructing feeder roads that would join major highways to link the entire nation would be a great start to melding the country for better economic development and social interaction.

The narcotics menace is on everyone,s mind, and individuals are on the take. Nduom welcomed the news that DEA will have an Accra office soon, and if elected, Nduom would empower security and military with resources, financial and human, to more adequately address the problem.

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Registering voters/Possible Forging Alliance with PNC  
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¶3. (C) Nduom discussed at length his campaign strategy, which hinges in large part on registering voters in all 2300 districts in the country. His aim is to have at least 100 registrants who would, in turn get ten more people each from every district to vote for the CPP. (Note: Some members have already gotten 20 more each. End note.) This would amount to about 2.3 million votes, if his plan succeeds. By mid-June Nduom hopes to have these individuals with CPP cards, as paid members. He would then blanket the areas with tee-shirts with his likeness. "You should see my face all over the country soon," he smiled. Nduom also envisions 100 CPP candidates to contest for parliamentary seats and believes the party has a good shot to win a block of seats.

Nduom surmised that his party had a pretty good chance in several regions. Even though Eastern and Central have significant strongholds of support for NDC and NPP candidates, the CPP will canvass and campaign rigorously.

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Forging with PNC ) Possible Edward Mahama as running mate  
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¶4. (C) Nduom disclosed a surprise tactic that he plans to reveal this weekend after he meets with PNC flag bearer Dr. Edward Mahama. Nduom will propose that the two opposition parties merge and contest this election as a united group with Nduom as the Presidential candidate and Mahama as his

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running mate. (Comment: Dr. Edward Mahama is a Christian medical doctor who lived for years in the United States. His wife, a U.S. citizen, is a pharmacist; they practice from their home/office in Accra. He is soft spoken, intelligent and committed to making Ghana a more responsive country to the needs of its most vulnerable. While the parties are ideological soul-mates and heirs to the Nkrumaist tradition, Nduom's revelation of a possible merger of these parties was a surprise. Edward Mahama is an excellent Embassy contact. End comment.)

-- Nduom has tried to have a meeting of all presidential candidates to discuss how they will work together following the elections, regardless of who wins the presidency. This would set a positive example for partisan supporters, hopefully. So far Nduom has not been able to gather all of them, but they have agreed to such a meeting in principle.

Nduom said he is close to Kufuor and that Kufuor is loyal to his friends and close associates ) too loyal, too often according to Nduom and this practice has been detrimental to the Kufuor Administration.

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No Fan of China/Parliament would oversee oil revenues  
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¶5. (C) Nduom believes that China is not doing positive things in Ghana or in Africa, despite its claims. Over favorably loan terms, inferior-quality products, and workers who don't assimilate well are part of a bad formula, he added. Moreover, China is not concerned with working cooperatively or in synergy with other development partners ) it is only concerned with securing a place for itself in these countries and guaranteeing access to badly needed resources. Nduom would work to establish Parliamentary control over oil revenues if elected and that those revenues would be used primarily for social enhancement, particularly road infrastructure, water and electricity production.

¶6. (C) Comment: It was clear from the discussion that Nduom's methodical mind is at work. His extensive travel

throughout the country and his strategy for registering voters indicates he is trying to cover all bases. If the PNC joins forces with the CPP it will all but ensure a heated second round of voting, and no guarantee about the outcome.

End Comment.

BRIDGEWATER